

Statistics

Population (2003)

Mississippi:	1,237,522	metro	(0.5% of total U.S. metro)
	<u>1,643,759</u>	non-metro	(3.3% of total U.S. non-metro)
	2,881,281	total	

United States:	241,395,996	metro	
	<u>49,413,781</u>	non-metro	
	290,809,777	total	

Farm-Related Employment (2000)

Mississippi:	280,921 jobs	(18.9% of total Mississippi employment)
United States:	25,834,574 jobs	(15.6% of total U.S. employment)

Number of Farms (2002)

Mississippi:	42,186	(2.0% of total U.S. farms)
United States:	2,128,982	

Average Farm Size (2002)

Mississippi:	263 acres
United States:	441 acres

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold (2002)

Mississippi:	\$3.1 billion
United States:	\$200.6 billion

Rank among all States in market value of agricultural products sold (2002): #27

Top 5 Agricultural Commodities (2002)

Commodity	Value of receipts (thousand \$)	Percent of U.S. value
Broilers	1,223,520	9.1
Cotton	376,905	9.8
Soybeans	260,438	1.9
Aquaculture	245,326	36.6
Cattle and calves	193,110	0.5

Value of Agricultural Products Sold Directly to Consumers (2002)

Mississippi: \$2.44 million
United States: \$550.9 million

Farmers Markets (2004)

Mississippi: 18
United States: 3,617

Market Value of Certified Organic Commodities (2002)*

Mississippi: \$649,000
United States: \$392.8 million

*(Data may not reflect actual industry growth after Oct. 2002 implementation of USDA National Organic Program.)

Certified Organic Acreage (2001)

Mississippi: 0 acres
United States: 2,343,857 acres

USDA-Accredited Organic Certifying Agents (2005)

Based in Mississippi: 1
Total: 96

Marketing Products and Services

Specific to Mississippi

Mississippi Farm Vendor Training Developed

In a cooperative research project with the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Mississippi State University in 2005, AMS surveyed local growers about their interest in

participating in the planned farmers market in downtown Jackson, and developed training activities that would help support the transition of local farm producers into direct farm marketing.

Minority Outreach Program Benefits Mississippi Farmers

In June 2004 AMS, as part of Project: United Exports, conducted a presentation at USDA Headquarters, entitled *Farming: A Family Business*. Peter Williams, the owner of Resource One Nursery of Lettsworth, LA, and his family were featured in the presentation. Williams is a member of the Tri-State Stakeholders, a consortium of farmers from Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas organized to build and establish a unified produce and livestock marketing strategy that will increase production and quality for current domestic markets. He is a "leader" farmer whose firm was named the Small Business Administration's 2001 Minority Service Firm. He presented information on ways in which Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi farmers can take part in the efforts initiated by USDA and Marriott to increase opportunities for minority farmers. The Williams children gave a presentation on their hardwood seedling tree business. Project: United Exports helps small and minority farmers to find global markets for their products.

Farm-to-School Marketing Workshop Support

At the request of conference organizers, AMS provided copies of several farm-to-school marketing publications for each attendee at the annual project partner conference for Heifer International's South Central office, held in Louisville in June 2004.

Food Distribution Society Meets in Biloxi

The 2003 Food Distribution Research Society annual meeting, entitled *Food Safety and Security: The Food and Industry Responds*, met in Biloxi in October 2003. Under Secretary of Agriculture for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Bill Hawks gave the keynote address. AMS moderated research sessions entitled "Consumer Behavior and Food Safety" and "Meat Consumption: Consumer Attitudes, Preferences, and Health Concerns."

Jackson Farmers Market Opens

Ground was broken for the new LeFleur's Bluff Farmers Market at the Fairgrounds in Jackson in October 2003. The site at on High Street and Jefferson is highly visible and close to the State fairgrounds. The complex combines a farmers market with private commercial stores. The new market has 30 farmer-vendor stalls and occupies 18,000 square feet of floor space inside a covered facility. The commercial portion includes a 12,000-square-foot commercial space, which will include restaurants and food-related shops featuring Mississippi-produced agricultural products. The new market concept opens the door for products not sold at the old market, including dairy products, meats, fish, and specialized organic items. AMS provided the design and worked with State officials to develop the market.

Fruit and Vegetable Conference Features Organic Food

The Deep South Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference and Trade Show was hosted by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture in Biloxi in December 2003. One day of the 3-day event was devoted entirely to organic agriculture. AMS presented information about USDA's recently implemented organic program. Among the other presenters were a Mississippi grower who talked about opportunities in raising organic blueberries; a representative from USDA's Agricultural Research Service who discussed organic pest management; and an Alcorn State University representative who talked about the organic mushroom industry. The conference targeted fruit and vegetable growers from Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Alabama.

Marketing Workshops for Limited-Resource Farmers

AMS presented information about the agency's direct farm marketing programs and

resources at several Mississippi-based conferences aimed at small-scale and limited-resource farmers. These included the USDA Farm Bill 2002 Listening Session, held in Itta Bena in December 2002, “Opening Doors, Bridging Gaps—Minority Farmers Developing Leadership for the 21st Century” conference, held in Vicksburg in February 2003, and the “Mississippi Small Farms and Marketing Conference,” held in Jackson in March 2003.

Regional Interest

Mississippi Farmers Attend Deep South Fruit and Vegetable Conference

In December 2005 the *Deep South Fruit and Vegetable Conference* was held in Mobile, AL. The conference was hosted by the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program; agriculture departments from Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana; and the Gulf South Blueberry Growers Association. It brought southern fruit and vegetable growers together to learn methods of improving their farm operations. AMS representatives chaired two sessions. One session discussed minority farming outreach programs. The other session, titled “Organic—What Does It Really Mean?” introduced organic agriculture and its potential for small farmers.

Mississippi Farmers Attend Workshop

In February 2002, Mississippi farmers attended a workshop entitled *Minority Farmers: Addressing Industry Needs and Standards* in Tallulah, LA. The workshop was held in conjunction with Project: United Exports, an AMS program to assist minority, small, and disadvantaged farmers step into the export market. AMS partnered with the Northeast Louisiana Farmers and Land Owners Association, the University of Arkansas, Alcorn State University, and Southern University in this endeavor. More than 100 farmers attended.

General Interest

New Farm-to-School Marketing Publication

Eat Smart—Farm Fresh! A Guide to Buying and Serving Locally-Grown Produce in School Meals (PDF) was published in December 2005 by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of USDA. The publication, which helps school lunch programs find locally-grown produce, was developed by a multiagency task force that included an agricultural marketing specialist from AMS, four child nutrition specialists from FNS, and the Community Food Security Coalition, a non-profit organization.

Farm-to-School Report

How Local Farmers and School Food Service Buyers Are Building Alliances (PDF) helps small farmers and school food service buyers explore how they might establish direct marketing linkages.

Marketing via the Internet

How to Direct Market Farm Products on the Internet (PDF) is designed to help small/medium-sized agricultural producers better develop Internet-based sales transactions by recommending effective methods for reaching and retaining customers.

Trends in Farmers Markets

U.S. Farmers Markets—2000: A Study of Emerging Trends (PDF) assesses the importance of farmers markets as a distribution channel for farm products, documents the recent growth in farmers markets operations, and provides an updated profile of management, operations, and merchandising at farmers markets.

Market Research on Small Meat Processors

Enhancing Commercial Food Service Sales by Small Meat Processing Firms (PDF),

published by AMS in cooperation with Texas A&M University, determines potential areas of competitive advantage for smaller scale meat manufacturing firms in supplying local restaurants and other local commercial food service accounts.